ECHO



TRANSLATION OF A SELECTION OF KASHMIRI RUBAIYAT-E-NAZKI

AYAZ RASOOL NAZKI

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(A SON'S TRIBUTE)

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میٚہ پَتہٕ تنقید گژھہِ میٲنِس کلامس
دَپَن یِہ چھُہ کانٛہہ شریک رومی تہٕ رازی
بیہ کانٛس دَپَن دِل چھُس پُرٕ انوار
سخن سازی چھہ بدٕ ہشِن جلسازی

✪✪✪

My verse will be assessed when I am gone,
and placed at par with *Rumi* and *Razi's* art
the wicked me will be eulogized a saint;
poetry in effect is a deceptive craft

Foreword

As I begin this foreword memories associated with Mir Ghulam Rasool Nazki crowd in upon my mind—sweet, poignant, heart-warming memories. I was a student of 8^{th} standard when I first knew his name through his poem about the Manasbal lake which formed a part of our urdu course, <u>chasma-i-faiz.</u> The poem went straight to my heart to remain indelibly imprinted there:

اک سہانی چاندنی رات اور یہ مانسبل کی جھیل
حسن کی چپ چاپ دنیا خلد کا عکس جمیل
دور تا حد نظر سرسوں کے کھیتوں کی قطار
آرزو کا سلسلہ لا انتہا فرصت قلیل

A charming moonlit night and the lake of Manasbal;
the mute world of beauty exquisitely mirroring paradise;
the widening landscape, lines on lines of mustard fields—
the endless chain of longings .
the limited lease of life.

My enthusiastic response to the verses then was largely instinctive. Much later was I to realise how they captured beauty and made it a mirror of life's endless longings.

In 1960's I was a college student trying to find my own way out, with, unfortunately or perhaps fortunately, little guidance available to me. Ever on

the look-out for something good to read, I laid my hands on every thing that came my way. Among my exciting finds of these days were *Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Tolstoy, Bernard Shaw, Will Durant, Ganahi's autobiography. Radakrishnan's* writings and Nehru's Discovery of India and Glimpses of World History. *Iqbal* had been an early love. Among the newspapers published from Kashmir then, the late *Shamim Ahmad Shamim's* weekly, Ayeenah, was my favourite reading to which I also contributed once a while. One day some one gave me a copy of a new weekly Al-Ghufran edited by Nazki and his son Bilal (now a High Court judge). It's chaste and meticulous use of urdu language (a rare commodity in Kashmiri journalism) thrilled me and I immediately wrote a letter of appreciation to the editor which appeared in the next issue of the paper. Al-Ghufran did not live long but left back lasting impressions with its readers.

I had to wait for long years before I could get an opportunity of personal contact with Nazki It came around 1980 or 1981. I was a University Lecturer then. An organization devoted to social work asked me to arrange a poetic symposium. I sent invitations to most of the leading poets of Kashmir, offering a small honorarium for participation in the symposium. Most of the poets accepted the invitation in the usual manner. However, the responses included a strange and singular letter. "I gladly and gratefully accept the invitation", said the author. " But I decline to accept any honorarium from an organization dedicated to social work". The letter-writer was

Mir Ghulam Rasool Nazki. Our first contact led to a sweet and lasting relationship. We now met frequently in symposia, in literary conferences and particularly the periodical sessions of ***Iqbal Academy***. Significant memories relating to Nazki are associated with all these meetings but the limits of this brief foreword do not allow me to continue with this ever-so- interesting account. In 1980's Nazki developed some heart ailment. I went to see him with *Prof.Rahman Rahi* and *Dr.Bashir Ahmad Nahvi* at his *Kathi-Darwaza* residence. He was cheerful and scintillating as ever. In the course of the conversation I told him that he had been kind enough to gift to me copies of all his works except ***Nimrud Nama***. He said that *Nimrud Nama* had been published many years ago and that he had no copies to spare except an old copy which he gave to me, before I left, with the inscription :

بگیر ایں ہمہ سرمایۂ بہار از من

Receive from me this whole wealth of springtide

I met Nazki last at his residence near the *Sher-e-Kashmir* Park. Kashmir was going through blood and fire, through an agony that it had never known in its history. Nazki was broken and shattered but conversation revived him a little and we left him with the usual pleasant impression.

II

Nazki possessed a colourful and magnetic personality. He had been born in a typically traditional ambience characterized by scholarship and mystical ways of thinking and living. He received his early education in Persian and Arabic classics from his father followed by brief period at school which came to an abrupt end as he was forced by economic compulsions to take up a school teachers job. Thereafter he educated himself in an enviable manner so that *Khwaja Ghulam-us-Saidain* picked him up as his literary assistant and editor of his magazine, Taleem-i-Jadid. Later Nazki became a remarkable broadcaster. Thus he began his life in a highly conventional atmosphere but was exposed, with the passage of time, to new developments in modern knowledge and civilization. The result was that he grew up to be an excellent combination of the best in the old and the new. He was aware of the insights of the new knowledge but remained firmly committed to a set of wholesome values sanctified by tradition, values which Kashmir has nurtured in its lap for the past so many centuries—socio-religious values ultimately rooted in a mystical vision about life and universe. Nazki's commitment to these values received its life and strength from an overmastering passion, his profound love for the *Prophet* (sal Allahu alihi wasallam)- a love which transcended reason and had its source deep down in the instinct. This is what saved his faith and kept

alive his ever- vigilant regard for healthy convention amidst his exposure to all that was modern:

خیرہ نہ کر سکا مجھے جلوہ دانش فرنگ
سرمہ ہے میری آنکھ کا خاک مدینہ و نجف

How could the glitter of Western knowledge dazzle my eyes?
The antimony of my eyes is the dust of Madina and Najaf.

Nazki wanted to bequeath these qualities to his children as well and was fairly satisfied that, as far as thinking and belief was concerned, they were his true heirs. Such a personality naturally found its most spontaneous outlet in *Munajat* (whisperings with the Ultimate Reality) and *Na`t (*song offerings to the Prophet).

III

Originally Nazki wrote his poetry in Urdu and Persian and hardly ever thought of composing in Kashmiri. In 1954, however, as a part of his official duties, he had to participate in Kashmiri poetic symposia where, as he painfully records, he was treated to all sorts of nonsense in the name of poetry. This prompted him to compose himself in Kashmiri. In this way began a glorious chapter in the history of Kashmiri poetry. Nazki enriched Kashmiri poetry in general but made a distinct contribution to the genre of the quatrain so

that one can justifiably call him, in this particular respect, the *Omar Khayyam* of Kashmiri poetry.

How does Nazki himself look upon poetry and what sort of a poet is he? Here is the translation of two Kashmiri prose extracts and an urdu quatrain of the poet which, to my mind, sum up his definition of poetry:

I do not compose my quatrains intentionally. Some emotion is stirred somehow, an idea is born and, generally, the fourth hemistich occurs first to which I add the remaining three hemistiches for which I have to make an effort. (preface to Awaz-e-Dost)

God has gifted man with a mind which is ever at work all day and night. Whether one is awake or asleep mind keeps on working and assimilating experiences. If some one has the capability of effectively expressing these experiences in language he may be able to write poetry which has a natural appeal to the reader. The ideas which poetry expresses are not always new but the way of expression is new and original and fascinates the reader.(preface to Kaawe-Yenewol)

اگر تو شاعری وہ شاعری ہے
کہ بس الفاظ کی جادوگری ہے
ہم ایسی شاعری سے باز آئے
کہ اصل شاعری پیغمبری ہے

If that poetry is regarded as genuine poetry
Which is nothing but jugglery of words,
Then I disown and renounce such poetry
As genuine poetry is prophecy and
communication of message.

Thus in Nazki's view poetry is a gift as well as craftsmanship; it is felicity of expression; and it ought not to be purposeless. Nazki's own poetry is an apt illustration of this definition of poetry. Masterly ease and felicity of expression is its hall-mark but it always brings lots of wisdom in its lap. A healthy social consciousness and sensitive response and comment on life's goings-on inform all his poetry. He subjects even the bitterest realities of life to the terms of poetry and thus at least succeeds in blunting their edge if not getting the better of them altogether. Certainly poetry, apart from its other uses is an effective psychological weapon to fight the sorrows and sufferings of life. *Nietzsche* remarked about *Keats's* odes that they were the poet's resistance to death that faced him in the form of the fatal disease of tuberculosis. It will be highly rewarding to look at *Omar Khayyam's* quatrains, *Shakespeare's* sonnets and *Ghalibs's* poetry (with its integral and in-built humour) from this point of view.

The most dominant impression that one gets from Nazki's poetry is that he has complete mastery over expression. He was the commander of the words and they ever obeyed his will. This is not to underplay the role of conscious artistry in his poetry. In one of his quatrains he complains that his readers would enjoy with abandon the lucidity and spontaneity of a quatrain of his without realizing how much sweat and labour has gone into the making of this lucidity and spontaneity. This points to a fundamental fact which is

true of all poetry. In its ultimate origin poetry is a gift which some have and some do not have and the complex psychological-cum-suprapsychological process called inspiration is ever at work alongside deliberate workmanship in the production of poetry. Nazki has the gift and the inspiration as well as the skilful artist's knack of turning raw ore to gold.

Such a poetic temperament can successfully handle any form of poetry-but Nazki has a mysterious and irresistible pull towards short lyrics, particularly the quatrain, where the canvass is apparently limited and less demanding and yet the poet's powers of capturing the quintessence of experience and distilling it in verse of high poetic intensity are tested to the extreme. You seize an idea, a fleeting emotion, a maturing experience and, turning it over and over in your mind, find a suitable verbal mould for it. Did the great *Omar Khayyam* work at his matchlessly profound quatrains like this? Since the quatrain suits Nazki's genius most, he turns to it again and again and achieves his best poetic successes in this genre.

The present work is a comprehensive selection and translation of Nazki's Kashmiri quatrains by his illustrious son Dr.Ayaz Rasool Nazki. It is a fitting tribute of a son to his father. The fact that Ayaz has made his selections from his father's quatrains only indicates his inherent critical acumen, for it is in this genre that Nazki has excelled most although he has handled all other forms of poetry quite competently.

Most of these selections and translations were made in the poet's life-time and were seen and approved by him. What a pity he did not live to see them in print!.

Those who have tried their hand at translating poetry know with what difficulties the way is beset. Essentially poetry is untranslatable. At the most you can translate the sense, the idea contained in a verse but poetry, to be sure, is not the idea but the inevitable, the only, expression of the idea. Poetry is authentic when the words it uses are irreplaceable. If they are irreplaceable how can they be translated in another language which is different in its genesis, its provenance and its evolution. Translation of a poem, when successful, is a new poem. *Edward Fitzgerald's Omar Khayyam* is genuine poetry because he translates *Omar Khayyam* in a way that new poems are born although the fact remains that these new poems would not be there if *Omar Khayyam* were not there. Ayaz Rasool Nazki has justifiably taken liberties with the original in order to make the translation, as far as possible reflective of the original. Those who can read the poet in Kashmiri will naturally be averse to exchanging the original for the copy.

Those who do not know Kashmiri will get a fair idea of the charm and subtlety of the original from these translations. In fact such translations can never claim perfection. *Edward Fitzgerald* worked all his life on the translation of *Omar Khayyam's-Rubaiyat* and

issued several editions of them with significant revisions in each edition. Ayaz Rasool Nazki's translations may also require such review and revision in order to get closer to the original. But even in the present form. they are a treat to read. I consider it my good fortune to be associated with this work and heartily thank Dr. Ayaz Rasool Nazki for this.

Professor G.R.Malik
Head of Department of English
&
Dean Faculty of Arts,
University of Kashmir

University Campus,
Srinagar
26 December, 1998

Acknowledgements

During last winter I translated few of the quatrains and sent them to father on his 88th birthday (16th March 1998). He was happy but for him "it was too late in the day". Father passed away exactly a month after (16th April 1998)

I am grateful to Prof. Rehman Rahi for going through the manuscript and making valuable suggestions. Dr.Gh.Rasool Malik Prof. & Head, Department of English & Dean Faculty of Arts, Kashmir University took pains in reviewing the translations and writing an exhaustive foreword.

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My wife Tasneem, **children** Aliya and Manshoor have always been a source of strength.

A.R.Nazki

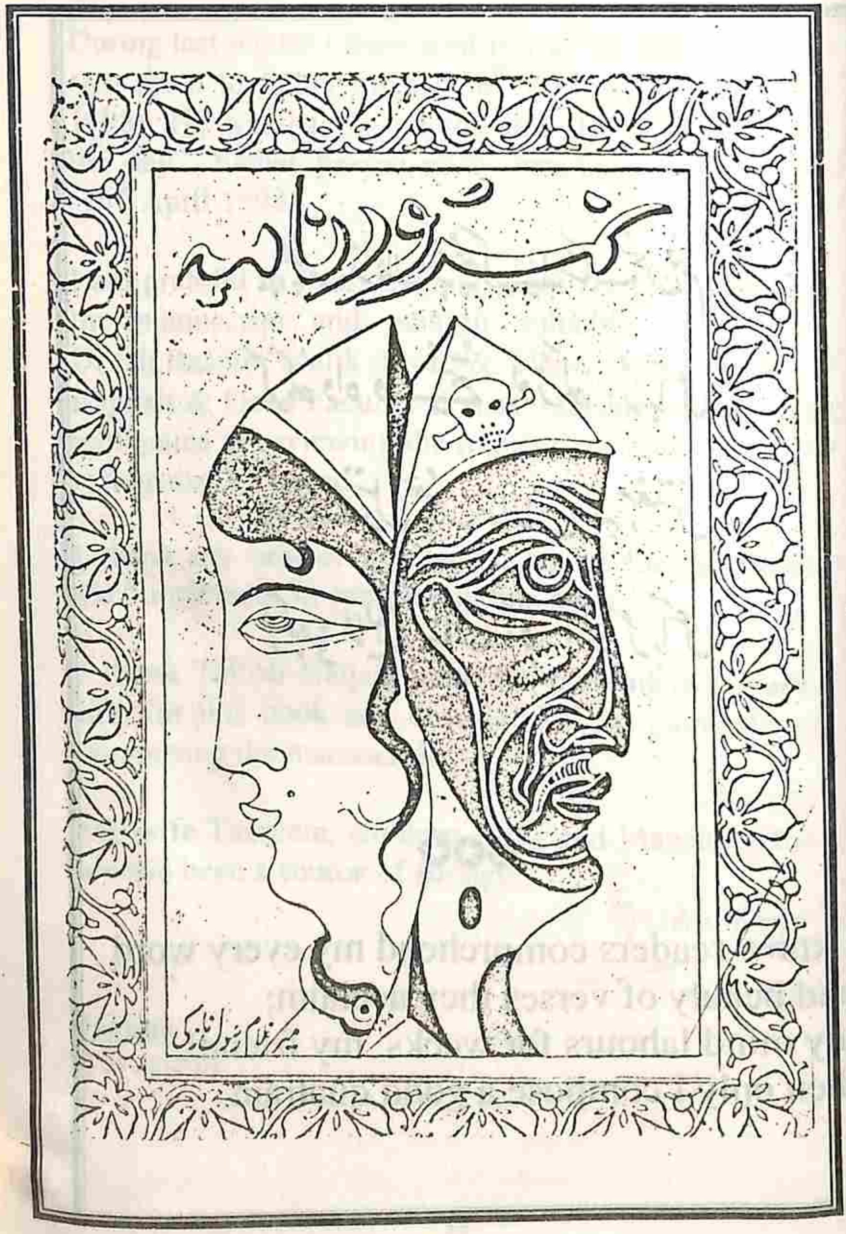
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بہٕ چھُس زاناں ژٕ چھُکھ بےٚ شک سُخن فہم
کرٕکھ واہ وا سیٹھےٚ بوزٕکھ رُباعی
دِماغُک تیٖل چھُس زالاں بہٕ ہفتس
لیکھنہٕ لایق بناں اَدٕ اَکھ رُباعی

✪✪✪

I know readers comprehend my every word
and beauty of verses they acclaim;
my mind labours for weeks, my friend!
then only I compose a good quatrain.

Nimrud Nama (1964)



When oppressive darkness engulfs me,
when burdens of being weigh me down,
your name suddenly sets me free,
your name brightens up the sky;

✪✪✪

My long night of loneliness drags on,
won't you come?
to end my pain at advent of dawn,
won't you come?
morning rays would see the tears that
I have shed,
my eyes have lit up a thousand lamps,
won't you come?

I wanted to see my mystery unraveled,
I longed to see the creator by my side,
blind I was, holding reason for a staff,
would that vision could serve me as a guide

✪✪✪

I am the *Pharoah*, *tur* is not a place for me,
blind as I am I'm never used to brilliant
light;
neglecting God, I created gods new,
one by one, all have given me a fright.

I keep quite, I am oppressed,
I tell the truth, I am condemned,
the fact is this, you rule my world,
and I am but a sojourner in your world.

✪✪✪

My devotion to you is not true,
no fire of conviction burns my heart,
when numerous images fill my mind
bowing my head is a bang on the wall.

I have carried His burden for long,
day and night, tilling His lands,
having sealed all my escape routes,
He is in heavens, in perpetual dance.

✪✪✪

Lands and wealth, orchards and mansions
joys and sorrows, fears and apprehensions,
horses, cattle, family and friends,
my Gods number tens of thousands

Neither a garden nor a nest you ever owned;
neither love nor pangs of hatred
you have known;
pains and joys of life are always beyond
you;
neither friend's nor family's burdens
you have borne.

✪✪✪

You are wise, seer, brilliant light;
up and down you control my every breath.
that is true, but listen to me,
my gracious Lord!
life you know, you never have tasted death.

When I lived in the heaven of yours,
masons did not build my abode;
one false step has ruined my peace
and condemned me to the drudgery of
chores

✪✪✪

I know you are in love with me,
sleepless for ages, never at peace.
Satan no doubt crossed your way
but why did you set him after me?

Your freedom of action is unfettered
a slave of yours can never shake,
but tell me Master, it bothers me,
why fire is kept for *Abraham's* sake?

✪✪✪

I contemplated and lost my peace
what an injustice at your hands!
saints and prophets are numbered, but
countless vagabonds and brigands!

Family, friends and cares of being,
power, fortune, cattle and land—
break all these idols and free thyself;
God will lend you a helping hand

✪✪✪

Do not bow before every ass and
lose your esteem and your pride;
worship Him and let Him only
be your friend, philosopher, guide.

Desert sands have burnt my soles
tears have dug my cheek and bone;
my stone hearted dame should know
a jet of water can split a stone

✪✪✪

Sun was addressed by the morning star
world does await your brilliant rise,
all are happy, joyous but!
in your advent some one dies.

That lovely one is roaming around,
meadows echo her melodious song,
brooks have washed their banks anew
spring has taken a furtive look.

✪✪✪

The tulip said as the gardener heard,
'do not toil too much,listen, I pray,
autumn lasts for half the year
the life of spring is a fleeting day.

Spring or autumn, fire or light,
I am used to melancholy view;
for me morning has a tearful eye
you are in rapture, seeing this dew!

✪✪✪

The mole on her cheek said, 'beware!
do not fall for her pretty face.
I too was enamoured by her looks
now see me burning in a furnace'

The crescent attains a full moon light
and begins its descent away from sight
joys and sorrows never come alone
the day always pursues the night.

✪✪✪

With a dazzling moon up in the sky,
and air reverberating with *Muezzin's* call,
when light catches the darkness by neck
go on and enter the kingdom of Lord.

A cluster of stars said to the moon,
"look at us ! why are you alone ?"
with a sigh, she looked up and said
"if only a true friend I had known."

✪✪✪

A fairy descended on to the earth
the valley she chose for her abode,
found out, she was hauled up again
at *Mansbal* fairy's tears are stored.

Some one said "if there be no sorrow
I would be an angel, totally freed"
I said "sorrow maketh one sage
had I no sorrow, I would be ruined"

✪✪✪

A lament is always on his lips,
a human is often prone to say:
"this day what a hard time I had,
nice days I had till yesterday".

Who makes a fool of wisest man !
who grants his bounty to simple folk?
do not pester, be happy and wait,
commend your affairs to your Lord.

✪✪✪

Running for riches and abandoning truth
hurting your friends, kith and kin,
looking at the virtuous with hateful eye—
God has truly blinded you."

You may call them friends indeed,
but a few may be friends in need.
wise men instead trust their selves,
trust your self and take my heed.

✪✪✪

Halaku Khan sets *Baghdad* on fire
Akbar the great establishes an empire
they come, blow their trumpet and depart
in the end, it is back to the bier.

As long as fit in gainful trade,
friends and family shower their love;
when, God forbid, some thing is wrong,
no one worships a setting sun.

✪✪✪

Condemned I am living in a rut,
unable to make my both ends meet;
my family shivers in the roofless hut,
I am still paying for *Adam's* wheat.

Having drawn at last an offering to God,
listen to my maxim, hold your breath;
this has unraveled the mystery of being,
life befriends the one who befriends death.

✪✪✪

Estimating profits and losses my friend!
digging up your thoughts night and day,
planning things with utmost care,
in the end it is He who has His way!

I have been suffering for so long,
further suffering I can't take;
yearning for you in every age
a page from '*Koran*' kept away.

✪✪✪

The time that means an eternal bliss
has no night and has no day,
the world that has no land or sea,
unto such my Lord ! lead my way.

Efforts may often bear no fruit
a genius is generally hidden from sight,
devotion requires approval from Lord
the dog keeps vigil night after night.

✪✪✪

Man is surrounded by his fears,
his faith and fortune going to dust;
boasting of gain and grieving over loss
in the end it is He who keeps the trust

Would you do something then do it now,
tomorrow may be too late, as all fun
youth, life, fame and fortune,
will all disappear with setting sun

✪✪✪

Streams are gushing and trees sprout,
spring breeze has stirred up the ground,
hills have turned now emerald green,
narcissus wakes up casting its shroud.

Having squandered away my youth
if only I could get back a day,
with house on fire I dig a well,
sun having set, I make hay.

✪✪✪

Honey bee sets out at the advent of dawn
collecting nectar from far and wide,
the drone in the hive chides her thus;
running in circles turns one's mind.

The candle whispered to the orbiting moth,
secrets of love I shall tell you not,
burning incense stirs one's soul
provided embers are glowing hot

✪✪✪

He can transform a drop into sea,
mighty and powerful beg for his grace,
even the Lord too eagerly awaits his wish,
how can a *qalander* beg and ask.

Knowledge endeavours to complicate things;
simple truths are lost in thoughts.
Adam would have scaled new heights,
reason makes him coward of sorts.

✪✪✪

This world is but a roofless hut
with muddy plaster always wet.
one may live even for a hundred years,
life in the end is just one breath.

It never occurred that I should strive
I instead rested whiling away time,
twilight has come and set me thinking,
of arduous journey back to my clime

✪✪✪

Carpenter runs a butcher's shop
a barber works with rule and saw;
times have tumbled and so has life
like begets like, is divine law.

Rogues are holding the genteel down,
devil has married the lovely lass;
the visionary trips and breaks his limb,
the blind are carrying the lighted lamps.

✪✪✪

On the day of judgement wicked will be
brought to their grief as you say,
but why, my Lord, do you put off,
the task which you could do today?

In misery workers sweat it out,
thieves and vagabonds flaunt their wealth,
crafty men have taken over all.
the simpleton waits for *houris* after death.

✪✪✪

Today's order is a bedecked corpse,
time will come when mystery is gone.
let the sun rise and truth be revealed;
let mountain peaks light up at dawn.

The world is waking up to a new dawn
the sun is emitting rays of gold
ups are down and downs are up
the old and the new are in one fold.

✪✪✪

Looking at this order, I am aghast,
what is the reason behind it all.
the wise live often from hand to mouth,
the foolish are wallow in limitless wealth.

Countless hospitals day and night
look after maladies of flesh and bones
is there no one who could care,
doesn't pain afflict human souls?

✪✪✪

Today's sages are given to a single trade
bartering faith for worldly pelf
a sage I always long to see:
whose feet even kingship likes to kiss

A stocky figure in the prime of youth
treating his life with scorn and hate.
"what went wrong?"I ventured to ask,
with a sigh he said "Oh! My fate."

✪✪✪

Poverty isn't toiling day and night,
unable at making both ends meet;
poverty they say on the other hand,
refers to having, but with greed.

An old man I saw painting his new home
as a young man cursed his vicious lot.
seeing His dispensation I wondered
what a world indeed do we own.

✪✪✪

You should at once give up the trade
when gains are few,losses accrue
when your shoe pinches you hard,
you should go on without a shoe.

Awaz-e-Dost (1985)

خشک تار و خشک چوب و خشک پوست
از کجا می آید این آوازِ دوست
(رومی اعلی اللہ مقامہٗ)

آوازِ دوست

میر غلام رسول نازکی

Talking to friends and sharing grief,
unburdens the chest and lightens the soul.
I have none with whom I could confer;
I keep on talking to myself alone.

✪✪✪

Was it a dream or an illusion,
I know not
a lion seeing his own reflection,
I know not;
you can comprehend known and unknown
with equal ease
am I, am I not in comprehension,
I know not

I have been mauled by this python,
let there be light
who is holding advent of dawn?
let there be light
this night may end, darkness disperse
let us pray in unison,
let there be light.

✪✪✪

You are some where around I know
but what is keeping you miles away ?
through my eyes you can reach my heart
in case you do not find your way.

Those who see Him lose their wits,
unseen at best a belief be Him,
groping in the dark night after night;
I conjure up images as I wish.

✪✪✪

What was destined and what I did
compare my Lord ! I humbly say,
any discrepancy if you find
put it on me as you may !

If I could, I would ask my God,
why did He put me through this mill?
why has my garment worn out,
even before settling the tailor's bill?

✪✪✪

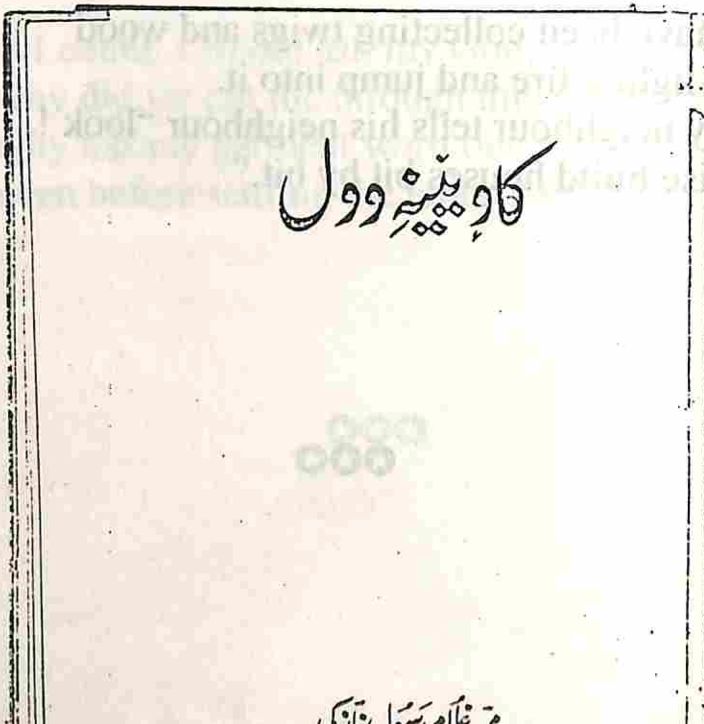
Spring or autumn, day or night,
nothing matters :
be it sun or be it snow, send it away;
I am at peace in the recesses of my self;
be it friend or be it foe, send it away.

I have been collecting twigs and wood
to light a fire and jump into it.
my neighbour tells his neighbour "look !
wise build houses bit by bit."

✪✪✪

I saw water up in flames
I saw rivers going upstream
I saw foxes riding a lion
will you interpret my little dream ?

Kaawe Yenewol (1996)



On the day of judgement when in shame,
I trembled, yet I heard Him say ;
" measure to measure for every sin
my mercy shall I gladly weigh"

✪✪✪

In guilt, I live in utter shame
but even then I am wedded to you.
why despair, I shall turn to thee
in your garden weeds too grow.

Day and night I chant God's name
God is great and God is great
often *Nimrud* sets me afire
often my God dampens the same

✪✪✪

If my suffering ends, what will you lose?
if we become friends, what will you lose ?
mortal I am, immortality I achieve,
if time thus bends, what will you lose?

Out of a million men you may
seldom find one faithful friend
I can be beyond friend and foe
if prophet and *Allah,* both be mine

✪✪✪

He is the merry laughter and wailing shriek,
He is the hapless lamb and butcher's knife
is also His
He is the seller, the buyer He,
tell me friend ! Whom do you cheat ?

Sprinkling rose water in your way,
escorting you to my dwelling, I would say,
what befell the mortals, tell me pray !
had you been a man, ! I dare say.

✪✪✪

I bore the burden of your trust
the mountain having failed to keep
reckless I was, I couldn't see,
Lord's brilliance over the heap.

I heard an old pious man once,
singing a hymn by the riverside,
"even when happy in husband's home
parents' home is heaven for every bride."

✪✪✪

Some boast, they are wealthy and wise
some boast of power when they rise,
in reality only he knows who ever knows
that truth is God, all else is mere lies.

Holding a needle in one hand
and a thread in another,
in tattered robes, old and blind
Zulekha stands on the road
asking every passerby,
"may some *Yousuf* pass this *Yousuf*
through that *Yousuf,s* little eye"

✪✪✪

You are human and to err is human too
but mark my words, there within you,
resides His trust, pure and true,
do not repose it in mortals of any hue.

I am not given to empty words ;
I am not fond of drawing swords ;
I only wanted to return to home;
I have had enough of alien abodes.

✪✪✪

A drop when mingled with ocean
is cured of ills of segregation.
if only her parents knew,
the bride is languishing in separation.

Ages ago I was banished from my land
my abode must have turned into ruin
ill at ease I am in an alien world
how I yearn to return to home.

✪✪✪

Fighting base desires is your
"battle of *Badr*"
do not my friend fall to dictates of self
you may, you may not take it from me
for the discerning every night is
"night of *Qadr*"

One whose conscience is clear, crystal like
in him vision and wisdom both unite,
wickedness, my friend on the other hand
melts away virtue, hardens vice.

✪✪✪

When life's worries weigh you down,
do not, my friend fret and fume,
instead enter the kingdom of self
and quietly retire to royal suite.

In reality your foe is your friend,
his animosity turns you to your God;
your friends are enemies in that they
keep you merry and away from Lord.

✪✪✪

Beware traveller, the lush green top,
hides a marsh treacherous underneath,
remains of traveller beneath your feet.
life is a malady, uncertain its course,
carry thy coffin, for one never knows.

A vagabond passes for a sage
no one looks beyond my face;
I feel guilty when some one says,
"holy man! bless me with thy grace."

✪✪✪

Drunk with power young and wealthy—
let this not turn your head, you see;
a quirk of fate may plunder thee,
for nothing lasts except He.

Rogues are happy without a care;
Prophets suffer on their part;
the greedy fatten on human flesh
the sensitive has an aching heart.

✪✪✪

Negativism, the fashion of the day,
shall it yield affirmation, I do not know,
for uncertainty shrouds my thought
today is spent, but what of tomorrow.

Death kills in the homes and in the field
death kills in mosque, temple
every nook;
entire world lies in its deadly domain;
death kills on the mount, hill, river
and brook.

✪✪✪

Fear writ large on every face,
air is filled with shrieks and cries,
death in pursuit of every being,
men are killed like poor flies.

Fear in cities and country-side
scares mortals of every kind;
keep your doors and windows shut—
fear looms large day and night.

✪✪✪

Life is suddenly out of gear;
we are possessed by unknown fear,
no one prays for bygone days;
'may the terror lessen' is only prayer.

Chaos has woven a spider's web,
we are trapped in its treacherous mesh.
when no one listens and no one cares;
where to go and whom to trust.

✪✪✪

Saffron fields in anguish cry,
oh ! glittering *Kashiri*, what befell thee!
brotherhood, amity, what befell thee!
what befell *Chrar's* luminous night,
heavenly valley, what befell thee!

Herds of beasts are roaming around,
you may wonder where is man:
he has usurped *Satan's* throne;
do not venture to hold his hand.

✪✪✪

You are beneficient, merciful God
you are the Lord of land and Seas;
banishing man from heavenly abode,
that too for one grain of wheat?

A drop vanishes into the vast ocean
never overcoming the ills of separation;
a wave tosses around with fellow waves
and lives in blissful association

✪✪✪

The one blessed with power to see
beholds the bounty of merciful God;
do not despair, when in need
guard thy treasure of faith in Lord

Satan led me away from God ;
I should have turned my face to Him:
I should have known what awaits me:
I should have resigned my fate to Him.

✪✪✪

I know whenever you sit down to pray
your mind wanders, goes astray;
yet do not panic, trust in Him,
who meets your prayer all the way.

King and courtier, both perish ;
prince and pauper, both perish;
youth and old age nothing lasts;
sage and soldier, both perish

✪✪✪

Might and strife, ripples in a pool ;
affairs of life ripples in a pool ;
be you *Darius* or *Alexander*,
affairs of life, ripples in a pool.

Acquiring wealth and all the riches,
fighting foes and making friends,
all our efforts are futile,
a mad man's dream is our life.

✪✪✪

Cursed *Satan* prayed, "Oh! God
let me live till the doomsday."
merciful Lord granted his wish,
shouldn't thus assured, believer pray?

A continuous agitation,
where has it gone?
sweet painful sensation,
where has it gone?
the choicest wine with a rapture sweet,
youth and the fairy world of dream
where has it gone?

✪✪✪

With every passing day I realize
the futility of this exercise,
life at best is a *Caravan Sarai*,
wherein I rest till sun rise.

One who is sought after is behind the veil,
and only a sensible person comes to grief.
a thorn remains for ever young;
life of rose is alas ! brief.

✪✪✪

Death is no end but a life ever new
eternal happiness, morning dew,
old man ! why are you scared ?
lasting youth is ahead of you.

Valleys, meadows, hills and woods,
all are guarded, how to escape?
oppressed I feel if only I could
soar up and see a new landscape !

✪✪✪

God has bestowed you with life
do not waste it in idle talk,
use your time in gainful trade;
tame your destiny, change your lot.

Mighty wind blows off the roof,
should it not?
a saddle comes off stumbling hoof,
should it not?
aching bones and aging always go together,
snow comes as winter's proof,
should it not?

✪✪✪

You are no doubt bruised and battered,
thank your Lord
the boat is safely anchored,
thank your Lord
morrow's worries can be put off till
tomorrow
today some how has been conquered,
thank your Lord.

The marble floor of my room
sparkles as star studded sky
the marble whispers into my ear
mortal ! mortal! You will die.

✪✪✪

'Mental giddiness and the backache
burning gut with acid and bile,"
each day begins with a tale of woe
'old man ! die now, close your file'

As a woodcutter entered the lovely woods,
panic gripped all the beautiful trees.
"look ! the handle on his axe
is from us, our fate is sealed"

✪✪✪

Life is a magnificent illusion
apparition, colourful mask—
and life after ? no one knows,
no one returns, whom to ask ?

Youth has a majesty all its own
royal countenance, regal tread;
consequences do not matter much,
princely bearing, carefree head.

✪✪✪

Death claims him as its own
as soon as a baby is born.
a new life opens its doors to him,
as soon as man in death is gone.

Communion with Lord frightens you
shunning the blissful interchange !
living like *Satan,* away from Him
missing on joy of infinite range.

✪✪✪

Life in fact is an eternal truth,
it has no beginning, it has no end;
not even a milestone does it make,
the thing that people designate death.

Some of my friends found their berths,
the ship then sailed to a shore unknown;
like an anchor, I am left behind,
if only a tempest sweeps me home!

✪✪✪

I am no longer of any import
here on earth, or in the service of Lord,
that is why I pass monotonous days,
death too overlooks the life's discard

Faith transforms fire into luminescence,
the mountain is turned into seat of Lord;
God himself orders flames to die
and *Nimrud's* embers are no longer hot.

✪✪✪

Away from you I lost my game,
reputation, credibility and fair name,
brass, I have treasured as gold,
who will buy it for his dame ?

All my concepts have been wrong,
enemies I have taken as friends.
life is in fact separation from Him;
death is really union with Lord.

❂❂❂

Suffering, away from home,
lonely, in an alien land,
restive, often in despair,
banished, away from Lord.

I deputize for you on this earth;
you have granted me the sway;
I thank you for honouring me my Lord,
but was it necessary to turn me away?

✪✪✪

A childhood friend died, they say,
may God rest his soul in peace !
awaiting my deliverance I am still around,
may God take me away with ease.

I am guilty of squandering youth
I did go on to the lowest ebb,
countless are my evil deeds
ashamed I am of myself

✪✪✪

I groomed asses and lionized dogs
to nourish body and seek luxury goods,
I put my soul to a deep sleep,
fattening my body with choicest foods

Life runs a deceptive, treacherous course
inflicting pains and sorrows anew,
Yousuf lamented inside the well,
"kith be many, friends are few'

✪✪✪

What is hell ? a raging fire
burning body, bone and all?
but I am told by the few,
who should know,
that hell in effect, is separation
from the beloved.

I am the one, who burnt down all his assets
I am the one, who pulled down his abode
I am the one who inflicted all this shame,
no one is, I am the one who is to blame.

✪✪✪

Squandered my youthful days
never listening to senior friends
now in the twilight of my age
I give sermons to junior friends !

I wasted my days in useless chores
uprooting jasmine and watering nettle,
young man ! may God bless your youth,
take my heed and prove your mettle

✪✪✪

Wide awake or asleep
under the shade of a *chinar* tree
relaxing at home or on a working spree
in the darkness of despair or sunshine of joy
you are with me, where ever you might be.

Bereft of vision the faithless rejoice,
advent of freedom they do not see;
the faithful see this world a prison,
death then comes and sets them free.

✪✪✪

The wander thirst is pushing me on
crossing hills and waters deep,
bruised and battered soles and limbs
could I afford a sound sleep ?

The hermit is concerned with God alone,
abandoning riches for the sake of Lord;
to worldly wise then he is a fool,
despised by men and loved by God.

✪✪✪

Day and night you are around I do know
how long will you play truant, and I wait!
you are the one I have always envisioned,
communion you are yet to grant, and I wait.

Seeing me depressed a friend ventured,
'if something bothers you, you should say'
who will comprehend my hidden pain?
from within the glacier melts away.

✪✪✪

During my youth none ever counseled,
to pass my days in gainful way,
now in the twilight my indifferent heart,
tells me to say whatever I may.

I am like a bird in cage.
awaiting the hour I am set free,
till that time I waste my days
in useless pursuits and uncertainty

✪✪✪

The spring breeze is infected with autumn,
the meadows are withering before time
flowers at *Nishat* are burning dry,
jackals are howling in *Shalimar* clime.

Winter with snow, *Samovar*, cozy *hamam*,
saffron, harisa, salt tea served hot,
and then an *Ali Sheikh, Hassan Sofi*
a *Shamim* in concert, unraveling
Rasul Mir and *Mehjoor's* poetic craft

Winter, snow, men of fortune
wine, dainties, *Zoon* singing bold.
winter, snow, wind, misfortune
a poor man exposed to terrible cold.

Thus speaks the politician

We have toiled for progress always,
our untiring efforts, nation sees,
having done with forests in time,
we now take up the *Chinar* trees !

✪✪✪

Houses have sprung up in the graveyard,
a lot we achieved in a single stride,
the city has changed into a cess pool,
choked with filth, the *Dal* has died.

Youth have become a selfish lot
the old men lack bearing and grace;
no one cares for any one now,
flowers seldom surround any grave.

✪✪✪

Hair splitting will not help,
anything that is beyond your reach;
God does take care of simple folk,
trust in him and have a sound sleep.

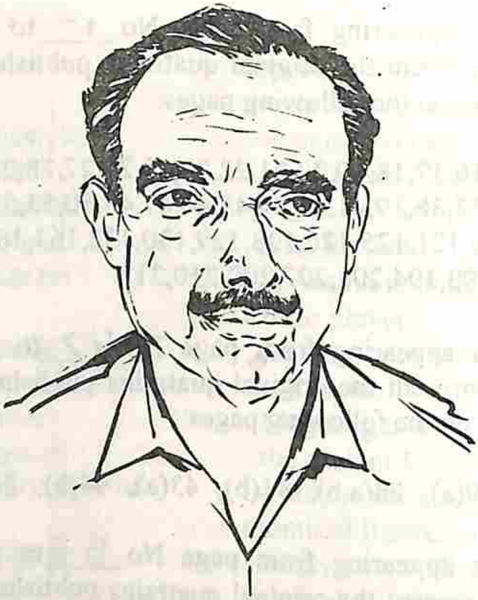
What to do and where to go?
helplessness surrounds the living folk;
death too is not within its reach
living under duress is its fate.

✪✪✪

All others smiled when I was born
eighty years ago I wept in grief.
may it be so then, when I die,
that I am smiling, others weep.

Glossary

Abraham	: The Prophet
Adam's wheat	: As against the apple in Bible, Adam is said to have fallen for grain (wheat)in the garden of Eden as per Muslim belief
Akbar	: the Mogul King
Alexander	: Alexander the great
Ali Sheikh	: Singer- Kashmiri
Baghdad	: capital of present day Iraq
Badr battle of	: the decisive battle fought between believers lead by prophet Muhammad and non-believers of Mecca.
Chinar	: the plan tree of Kashmir
Chrar	: town in Kashmir famous for masoleum of Kashmir's patron saint, Nur-ud-Din Rishi. The tomb and adjoining mosque were gutted when whole town was burnt down as a result of violence during 1995.
Dal	: famous fresh water lake in Srinagar, Kashmir, threatened by ever increasing encroachments and pollution.
Darius	: king of Persia
Halaku Khan	: a tyrant king
Hamam	: a specially built enclosure in Kashmir houses kept warm by burning firewood underneath,the granite floor.
Houri	: a heavenly fairy



Dr. Ayaz Rasool Nazki son of Mir Ghulam Rasool Nazki holds a Doctorate in Veterinary Sciences and works as Senior Scientist in Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences & Technology. Dr. Nazki writes both prose and poetry in Kashmiri, Urdu and English. His Urdu gazals have appeared in literary magazines in and outside Kashmir. He has written a number of articles, besides scripts for tele documentaries on Kashmir's culture. His major work of fiction ; 'Satisara', written in the back drop of Kashmir's past and present is under print.



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